

SECTION 1.1.

GENERAL DEFINITIONS

CHAPTER 1.1.1.

DEFINITIONS

Article 1.1.1.1.

In the present *Code*:

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Fallowing

means an operation where an *aquaculture establishment* is emptied of *aquatic animals* in order to break disease cycles and/or to allow the environment to recover [a period during which aquatic animal premises are left empty (for *disease agents* or parasites to die or be killed by *disinfection*)].

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CHAPTER X.X.X.

GUIDELINES FOR FALLOWING IN AQUACULTURE

Article X.X.X.1.

Introduction

Fallowing is a procedure commonly used to restore the environment of an *aquaculture establishment*. *Fallowing* starts immediately after a site has been emptied of *aquatic animals*, and in accessible facilities it should be carried out after cleaning and *disinfection* have taken place.

Fallowing is usually carried out as a routine hygienic measure prior to the introduction of new populations of *aquatic animals* into a given site. *Fallowing* has, however, a specific application as a disease control tool after an *outbreak of disease* in an *aquaculture establishment*, to increase confidence that the site is free of the disease agent after the *aquatic animals* have been removed and *disinfection* has taken place.

A number of *diseases of aquatic animals* pose a threat to the aquaculture sector, as well as to wild stocks of *aquatic animals*.

In order to diminish problems caused by *diseases* of socio-economic importance, the *Veterinary Authorities* or other *Competent Authority* responsible for aquatic animal health in a country should seek to establish satisfactory procedures for *fallowing of aquaculture establishments* in connection with control and eradication of *disease*.

The *Veterinary Authorities* or other *Competent Authority* should also seek to recommend *fallowing* procedures in *aquaculture establishments* even if disease problems are not present, i.e. before stocking a site with a new population of *aquatic animals*.

Article X.X.X.2.

Legal powers

In cases where *fallowing* may be a compulsory measure, for instance to help in the eradication of specific *diseases* or to restore *disease free zone* status, countries will have to establish the necessary legal framework that is needed for the implementation of *fallowing* procedures in *aquaculture establishments*. Legal provisions could include:

- Provisions for the circumstances under which *fallowing* has to be carried out,
- Listing of those *diseases* for which *fallowing* procedures are compulsory,
- Cleaning and *disinfection* procedures prior to *fallowing*,
- General procedures for *fallowing of aquaculture establishments*,
- Length of *fallowing* period,
- Restocking procedures after *fallowing*.

Article X.X.X.3.

Fallowing of aquaculture establishments

For disease prevention purposes, all *aquaculture establishments* should be regularly emptied and left fallow in accordance with current guidelines issued by the *Veterinary Authorities* or other *Competent Authority* responsible for aquatic animal health. These guidelines will be broad as they must address different kinds of *aquaculture establishments*; they must not target specified diseases and thus can only stipulate *fallowing* periods generally recognised to have a beneficial impact.

If a serious communicable disease is suspected or has been confirmed in an *aquaculture establishment*, all farms (sites) in control or *surveillance zones* established by the *Veterinary Authorities* or other *Competent Authority* should be subjected to a statutory period of *fallowing*, regardless of whether the farm (site) is only suspected of being infected, whether there are signs of the *disease*, or whether the *disease* has been confirmed.

Under certain conditions and based on the information provided, the *Veterinary Authorities* or other *Competent Authority* may determine that installations shall be emptied and left fallow in accordance with a co-ordinated plan for measurements taken to combat a disease.

Technical parameters for the development of a statutory fallowing plan:

Fallowing should start immediately after removal of all stocked aquatic animals.

The length of a statutory *fallowing* period should be based on scientific evidence of the likelihood of a *disease agent* surviving outside its host in the aquaculture environment, but also on the social and economical factors that prevail in the countries or zones concerned.

As a general basis, *fallowing* of *aquaculture establishments* without disease problems should be no less than one month in the ‘summer season’ and two months during the ‘winter season’. For *aquaculture establishments* in temperate regions that culture tropical species, *fallowing* during the ‘winter season’ may be a normal part of the culture cycle. For *aquaculture establishments* located in tropical regions, the length of time *aquaculture establishments* are fallowed may have to be adjusted to accommodate the difficult situation imposed by extended rainy seasons (‘winter’ in some regions), which may make successful fallowing impossible (i.e. a total dry-out cannot be achieved).

Within a control or combat zone in which a *notifiable disease* has been suspected or confirmed and for which compulsory *fallowing* is ordered, the length of a *fallowing* period should be assessed in relation to the number of sites, the qualities of the sites, and the extent of the *disease outbreak*.

Article X.X.X.4.

Instructions

Countries establishing *fallowing* procedures should develop a detailed set of instructions for clearance, cleaning and *disinfection* of *aquaculture establishments* prior to *fallowing*. For the purpose, the set of instructions set out in Section 5.2., Appendices 5.2.2., 5.2.3. and 5.2.4. in this *Code* should be used as guidelines.

Article X.X.X.5.

Restocking

All *aquaculture establishments* that have been under restriction as regards the occurrence of a notifiable disease should not be restocked until the statutory *fallowing* period has been completed.

The restocking of such farms should be from *aquaculture establishments* approved by the *Veterinary Authorities* or other *Competent Authority*.
